There are very few technologies we use daily that have not been upgraded from World War II technologies, but the FM spectrum is one of them (imagine still using computers from 1945). Radio needs an upgrade in a serious way because it is quickly becoming a has-been technology when in fact it should be viewed as the first and best wireless there is.

Therefore I expect the FCC will quickly adopt the Tomorrow Radio project being proposed by the engineering staff of Ibiquity and National Public Radio so that the new digital radio standard will have the capacity to carry two channels of audio (or as future software improvements are made…maybe even three channels). Since the FCC was created because of radio, I believe it would hold a soft spot to keep radio strong in the face of the new technologies the FCC has helped develop like satellite radio with 160 channels and wireless Internet with almost limitless possibilities of downloading and music streaming.

I am the General Manager of Indiana Public Radio in Muncie, Indiana. In a small market on the fringes of Indianapolis, I have trouble justifying the conversion of my five Class A transmitters to digital when the FCC has neither a deadline for me to convert nor a demand to radio manufacturers to put out all digital product especially when all I can be promised is near digital quality of broadcast—for those listening to my digital signal because I'll also have to continue with all my analog broadcasting indefinately. That sounds like double the equipment for little gain to me. I am for digital conversion of AM as soon as possible because the audio difference is remarkable, but it is difficult to really hear the differences between digital and FM quality when driving full speed in a car with all the road noise.

However, if you would authorize the capacity for two digital channels, then I would have a very compelling reason to change because I could begin the process of dividing my currently schizophrenic schedule of news/talk and classical music into two separate programming streams. I could include data for each stream like what was playing or who the current guest was and still have the possibility of adding some future datacasting services.

Should other stations not be interested in developing alternative channel service, they could continue at the full 96 Kbs audio stream. I do like the ability to be flexible with my "pipe," but I would relish the ability to be slightly closer to challenging my satellite radio competitors. Though two does not match 160 channels, it would give me twice as much of an opportunity to serve my listeners locally than I have right now. Thank you.